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## **Tutunjian and Schumer Speak Out Against Division III Reform**

For Immediate Release  
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(January 8, 2004- TROY)- Mayor Harry Tutunjian joined New York State Senator Charles Schumer Thursday in a bi-partisan rally against a vote by the NCAA Division III membership schools that could end the Division I hockey status of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Tutunjian, Schumer, RPI head coach Dan Fridgen, several hockey players, and city and school officials gathered at the RPI Field House Thursday to voice their opposition to the January 12 vote.

If the proposal passes, the result would prevent Division III schools from offering scholarships to field Division I teams in just one sport. The entire Division III membership, made up of 416 schools will vote on the proposal during the NCAA Convention in Nashville on Monday.

In 1985, RPI won the Division I National Championship and sat alone atop the college hockey world. Over the years, numerous players have gone on to have careers in the National Hockey League, most recently former RPI star and Troy native Matt Murley, who scored the first goal of his career earlier this year.

“If this Division III reform is approved, stories like that of Matt Murley or the 1985 National Champions will be that much harder to find,” Tutunjian said. “It makes little sense to punish such a storied school with deep hockey blood lines like RPI. I remember watching the 1985 National Champions in Troy, New York as a high school student. I remember the excitement it provided.”

Should the Division III membership approve the legislation, beginning in the 2008-2009 season, RPI would have to play its Division I hockey schedule without scholarships, field a Division III hockey team, or move all sports to Division I.

During his speech, Tutunjian spoke emotionally about attending RPI games since he was a young boy. He noted the school’s commitment to Division III could easily be seen in the recent playoff run by the football team.

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“Just this year, RPI proved its value to Division III by making it to the National Semi-finals in football,” Tutunjian said. “That was a great experience and the Troy community was behind them completely. But nothing beats the Big Red Freakout. Nothing beats the enthusiasm this area has for the guys who skate every Friday and Saturday night. It would be a shame to destroy that.”

“From Darren Puppa to Joe Juneau to future Hall-of-Famer Adam Oates to Matt Murley and Matt Cavosie, the stars of tomorrow, RPI and the City of Troy have a unique tradition of playing under the big lights,” Tutunjian added. “RPI has a reputation as a superior learning institution in the country. The hockey team has a reputation as superior competitors among the biggest schools in the country. I plead for the membership of the Division III schools to not take that away.”

The schools that could be hurt by the legislation are RPI, Clarkson, St. Lawrence, and Colorado College hockey, Johns Hopkins lacrosse, SUNY Oneonta men’s soccer, Colorado College women’s soccer, Hartwick water polo, and Rutgers-Newark men’s volleyball.